



EDUCATION REFORMS TOWARDS 21ST CENTURY SKILLS: INTEGRATING CHARACTER EDUCATION IN TEACHER EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Harriet Wambui Njuiⁱ

Riara University, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

This paper reviews literature on character education with a view to making recommendations on how learning institutions in Kenya could integrate character education in the curriculum in order to equip learners with skills needed for success in life and workplace. Character education is a component of learning which forms part of the four integral dimensions of a complete and balanced education namely knowledge, skills, character, and metacognition. Integrating character education in the curriculum is crucial because the goal of education is to produce confident, compassionate and ethical citizens who are well engaged in the development of their society. Teachers are expected to adequately prepare learners to face the challenges of the 21st century by instilling them with personal development and the ability to fulfill social and community responsibilities as global citizens. Teachers' success in this expectation is pegged on the quality of their pre-service training. Thus, if teachers are to effectively impart learners with character, teacher training institutions should make character education an integral and compulsory component of pre-service teacher training. Examples of character qualities are mindfulness, curiosity, courage, resilience, ethics, leadership, equity, equality and inclusion. It is hoped that this review will shed light on the need to integrate character education at all levels of learning to enable learners acquire holistic quality education that is capable of transforming them into empowered ethical citizens who are capable of contributing to the development of the society at both local and global arenas. The paper will be followed by an empirical research in teacher training institutions in Kenya to determine whether the institutions have incorporated character education in their curricula.

ⁱ Correspondence: email hunjui@riarauniversity.ac.ke

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1. Introduction

Character education is the acquisition and strengthening of virtues, values, and the capacity to make wise choices for a well-rounded life and a thriving society (Berkowitz). Character education supports the social, emotional and ethical development of learners by instilling in them important core, ethical and performance values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for self and others. It also provides long-term solutions to moral, ethical, and academic issues of concern in society and schools and teaches learners how to be their best selves and how to do their best work (Character Education Partnership). It is imperative that schools develop supportive environments for learners' holistic development because children spend most of their time in school. However, it is interesting to note that most public schools in Kenya do not have an environment that supports learners' development as most have overstretched their facilities due to huge classes with limited facilities.

Character education is also referred to as moral education, values education, values in education, values education, character development or developmental education. Each term aligns with different theoretical perspectives. Berkowitz asserts that character education is aligned with more conservative, traditional, and behavioral approaches while moral education is aligned with more liberal, constructivist, and cognitive approaches. On the other hand, values education is aligned with theoretical, attitudinal, empirical approaches. Given the conflicts between the different approaches, Berkowitz suggests a dialectical approach to character education, noting that the approach could enhance collaboration and networking to establish the character qualities relevant in today's dynamic world. Nurturing learners with relevant character qualities is crucial because it empowers with skills that enable them to cope with the complex societal challenges of the 21st century world and to also compete for jobs at international level.

Andrew Churches (2015) observes that character education is an integral component of the 21st century skills and also notes that the 21st century skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and collaboration are founded on UNESCO's four pillars of learning (Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to be and Learning to live together) which represent a holistic view of an education that addresses the whole person-the mind, the body and soul/character. Learning to know emphasizes the development of the faculties of memory, imagination, reasoning,

problem-solving, and the ability to think in a coherent and critical way while learning to do entails nurturing learners with skills such as ability to communicate effectively with others, team work, interpersonal relations, adaptability to change, competency in transforming knowledge into innovations and job-creation, and a readiness to take risks and resolve or manage conflicts. Developing learners with these skills enables them to effectively participate in the global economy and society.

On the other hand, learning to be entails providing learners with self-analytical and social skills to enable them develop an all-round complete person physically, psychologically, socially and emotionally. This broad development of learners demands that a curriculum should cultivate qualities of imagination and creativity; acquire universally shared human values; develop aspects of a person's potential (memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacity and communication skills); develop critical thinking and exercise independent judgment; and develop personal commitment and responsibility. These qualities prepare learners to confidently face the world of life and work and contribute to the welfare of the society.

Learning to live together requires teachers to expose learners to values that enable people and societies to live in peace and harmony including human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect, peace and human relationships. In addition, education is expected to develop learners with knowledge and understanding of self and others; appreciation of the unity and diversity of the human race and the interdependence of all humans; empathy and cooperative social behavior; respect of other people and their cultures and value systems; conflict resolution through dialogue; and competency in working towards common objectives. It is critical that learners are nurtured with these values from the early (formative) years of education to enhance their character formation as they go through the education process. This is important because employers today are not only concerned about academic certificates as they recruit people for employment; character attributes such as integrity, confidence and teamwork are key considerations. Character is also a crucial factor in maintaining one's job in today's world where competition for jobs is very stiff.

Despite its significant role as a component of education, character education has not been given serious consideration in Kenya despite the fact that policy documents and national goals of education have stipulated the national values to guide education since independence. This situation seems to confirm Pinar's (1975) assertion that the curriculum in theory is not the curriculum in practice. Wamahiu (2015) maintains that the high premium given to examination and certification has led to neglect of values and ethics in schools noting that the numerous challenges Kenya has continued to grapple with (including corruption with impunity; greed and theft of public money;

examination cheating; negative ethnicity and lack of patriotism; cultures of violence, abuse and impunity in learning institutions; criminality and terrorism in the wider society) are attributable to erosion of values. She however observes that the challenges are not limited to learning institutions as virtually all sectors of the society are suffering from corruption, negative ethnicity and nepotism which could be associated with neglect of the values in both learning institutions and the society in general. She therefore recommends that the teaching and learning of values should be reflected in the ethos of the school and taught seamlessly, employing a whole school approach. In his contribution to the discussion, Berkowitz (2013) argues that if schools are to effectively inculcate character, they must make a choice to teach it, make it a top priority and ensure that it is at the core of the school's mission. However, success in these efforts requires that policies and laws on integration of values in the curriculum are enforced so that character education becomes an integral component of education.

Contributing to the discussion, Kafu (2011) with specific reference to teacher education asserts that ethics in teaching have never been formally designed and taught to teacher-trainees since the colonial period, noting they are mentioned casually in passing as aspects of principles and practices of teaching. Consequently, teachers do not understand the teaching profession itself and its demands. They also do not understand themselves and their role in the profession, other than instructional responsibilities. This assertion may explain why teachers involve themselves in activities that are antagonistic to the expectations of the profession and the society. For instance, teachers have been caught in misbehaviour with regard to relationships with students of the opposite sex where sexual abuse reports continue to be brought to the limelight by the media. While sexual abuse has been noted to affect all levels of learning, primary schools seem to experience the worst as male teachers defile the children they are expected to protect. This has raised concerns on teacher ethics, responsibility and trust over children under their care.

Further, teachers' deliberate timing of strikes to coincide with national examinations has been interpreted by education stakeholders and the general community as irresponsible punishment to innocent children at a time they need them most. Other areas that continue to raise questions about teachers' ethics include unbecoming behaviour in the streets including actions that depict hooliganism, use of vulgar language and interference with private school operations as they threaten teachers to stop teaching and join the strike. These and other issues have raised concern on the need for teacher education programme to incorporate ethics education in order to inculcate teacher trainees with values such as citizenship, respect and responsibility with a view to transforming them into empowered ethical citizens who are have a

positive impact on the development of the society. Equipping teacher trainees with the skills and pedagogy for character education through pre-service training is critical if they are to effectively prepare them to offer holistic quality education that empowers learners to contribute to holistic development of the society.

Notably, in Kenya, character education has been a standalone in schools for decades. For instance, primary schools teach character education through pastoral programmes once a week (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, Primary Education Syllabus, 2002). The programme is solely managed and taught by priests or representatives of the different religious groups represented in a school (mainly Islam and Christianity) who focus on moral education from the perspective of their specific religion. However, not all students have an opportunity to attend to the programme as most schools use the time allotted to the pastoral programmes to teach learners in advanced classes (7&8) in order to cover the syllabus in readiness for national examinations.

Character education is not also integrated in the secondary school curriculum although some schools display their core values on strategic positions (including noticeboards and posters) and make time to talk about them during school assemblies mainly as a warning when learners are observed to slacken in discipline matters. A few students who opt to do Religious Education (Islamic or Christian Education) as an elective in Kenya Certificate of Secondary School Education (KCSE) also manage to learn ethics and values based on a religious perspective. This implies that other issues covered by character education are not taught. In addition, little if any character development is achieved as the teaching focuses on preparing learners for national examination.

It is also worth noting that a compulsory course on Social Ethics which was offered in the KCSE Syllabus was contested by the Catholic Church which argued strongly that the teaching of ethics should be integrated with religious education to ensure a holistic approach to the subject. This led to the removal of Social Ethics from the current Kenya Certificate of Secondary School syllabus (2002). However, although Life skills Education programme was introduced in the syllabus to replace Social Ethics, teachers hardly teach it, they rather use the time to teach examinable subjects to ensure that they adequately prepare students to excel in national examinations (Wamahiu, 2015). This omission of the character component in the curriculum entails that learning institutions continue to churn out graduates with academic qualifications but lacking in character. It is no wonder the debate on lack of employability skills among university graduates is still resurgent. In support of character education, P21 (2013) maintains that if graduates are to contribute responsibly at local, regional and national levels as

informed voters and citizen advocates, schools must nurture them with citizenship skills to enable them tackle varied global challenges including economics, socio-cultural environmental and health issues. This requires that curricula are diversified to include the range of competences needed to address the emerging global challenges, enhance interdisciplinary approach to teaching and integrate character education. Notably, although Kenya's Basic Education curriculum reforms have integrated character education (Basic Curriculum Reforms Framework, 2017), teachers have not been trained on character education even as its implementation is on course from January, 2018. Effective implementation of the reforms demands that in-service teachers are adequately empowered with the skills and pedagogy needed through in-service training. It also requires teacher training institutions to incorporate character education in their curricula so that they can churn out teachers who will be effective in developing learners with character.

2. Character education: the Concept

Character education is viewed in different perspectives. While some see it as pure personality, others see it mainly as behavioral. Berkowitz defines character as an individual's set of psychological characteristics that affect that person's ability and inclination to function morally, and this leads a person to do or not to do the right thing. Lickona (1991) cited by Berkowitz maintains that character is a complex psychological concept concerned with the characteristics that support moral functioning such as capacity to think about right and wrong, experience of moral emotions (guilt, empathy, compassion), engagement in moral behaviors (sharing, donating to charity, telling the truth), acting with honesty, altruism and responsibility. The varied views explain the reason why character education is muddled with controversy. It also implies that character education is a selection of specific attributes of character (values) that a nation considers important to develop in its citizens through education.

For instance, Kenya's education policy documents emphasize the need to inculcate and equip learners with desirable values. Article 10 of the Kenya Constitution (2010) enshrines Kenya's national values as patriotism, national unity, sharing and devolution of power; the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people; human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalized; good governance, integrity, transparency and accountability; and sustainable development (Progress, 2016: National Values and Ethics). Also, the Basic Education Act 2013 provides guidance on the character qualities to develop namely patriotism, nationhood, unity of purpose, togetherness and respect

and mandates the education sector to inculcate learners with the values for their character development. In addition, the government has since independence outlined the national values and principles to be incorporated in education as outlined in the National Goals of Education in Kenya (<https://softkenya.com/education/goals-of-education-in-kenya/>). The curriculum spells out the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values a learner is expected to acquire through various disciplines. Specifically, the six and seventh national goals of education respectively seek to promote national unity, respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures and to foster international consciousness to nurture learners' positive attitudes towards other nations as Kenya is part of the complicated and interdependent network of the interconnected world (*National Goals Of Education kenya.elimu.net/.../Education (Dec. 2007)*).

However, today's interconnected world demands nations to align themselves with the 21st century skills to ensure that graduates of their education system are internationally competitive. This is imperative because character education is an integral component of the 21st century education. To this end, the core competences to be achieved by the learner in Kenya's Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) reforms (namely communication and collaboration, self-efficacy, critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and imagination, citizenship, digital literacy and learning to Learn) are informed by the 21st century skills framework (Howland, Johassen, & Marra, 2012). The competences are aimed at ensuring that education in Kenya will churn out engaged, empowered and ethical citizens who are able to cope with the dynamic demands of life and employment.

It is paradoxical that although Kenya acknowledges the need to develop learners with character values through education as noted in the policy documents cited above, Wamahiu (2015) maintains that expression of values and ethics appear to be lacking in virtually all domains of life (political, social and economic). She also asserts that Kenya has not synthesized its national values as laid out in the constitution. These are issues of concern to an educator because as Wamahiu (2015) further argues, values do not only inspire peoples' actions and attitudes and provide a framework for living; they also define one's humanity, judge the worthiness of a particular idea or action, and provide criteria by which something is judged good or bad, right or wrong. Learning institutions should institutionalize character education if they are to transform learners into productive global citizens. This is crucial because among other things, education system functions to instill the dominant values of a society and shape a common national mind in various aspects including a common heritage, mainstream standards and rules, national unity, responsible citizenship and inclusion of all people (The Role of Education in Society, 2015). Schools should exploit the opportunity to develop

learners with character as they (learners) spend most of their time at school. However, success in this endeavor demands that the school curriculum incorporates the fundamental values that reflect the society's ethos and principles embodying its nationhood.

Despite the guidance offered on Kenya's national values by the policy documents above, development of values has been compromised by the entrenched, elitist model of education whose intellectual focus benefits a few learners with academic inclination while the majority others are dismissed as failures, thus, excluding them from education. The model also neglects the development of gifts and talents of learners who are not intellectually inclined (Nyerere, 2009). This challenge could be alleviated by employing learner centered pedagogy to enhance inclusivity of all learners and also align education with Sustainable Development Goal No. 4 which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Sustainable Development Goal 4- United Nations). Wamahiu (2015) asserts that most schools in Kenya do not comply with the government policy on inclusive schools. For instance, infrastructure and facilities for learners with disabilities are missing, sometimes due to lack of understanding of what equity, equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination concepts entail.

Kibera and Kimokoti (2007) also report on lack of inclusivity in schools noting for example that Kenya secondary schools have been stratified into national, private, provincial, district and harambee schools since independence. The categories differ significantly with regard to facilities and resources for enhancing teaching and learning. For instance, while national and private schools enjoy excellent facilities and resources needed to enhance learning, most district schools have no basic resources including text books to support teaching and learning, yet all the schools are expected to compete for the same national examination. This has over the years meant that learners from national and private schools are better advantaged to perform well in examinations and access job opportunities compared to their peers in district and harambee schools. This has to-date compromised inclusion, equity, access and fairness in education. Integrating character education in teacher education curricula is one way of alleviating these gaps because this would ensure that teacher trainees are equipped with the skills needed to deliver character education. Teacher empowerment is critical because *"Teacher effectiveness is the single most important factor in student achievement"* (www.nepalhti.org/teacher-effectiveness-is-the-single-most-important-factor-in-studen). In addition, building teacher capacity through regular in-service courses is also crucial in keeping them abreast with new developments in education nationally and internationally to help

them remain relevant in their teaching career. Addressing the gaps is also critical in enhancing achievement of sustainable development.

Effective character education requires that the hidden curriculum within the school and the community at large should positively enhance character development. This entails that teachers, staff and all those who interact with learners provide a supportive and friendly learning environment and also play their role as models in the character qualities imparted to learners (Berkowitz). A learning environment should also embrace the principle of total quality management (TQM). The principle demands an organization-wide commitment to infusing quality to every activity and long-term dedication with a view to improving quality throughout the organization, and enhancing active participation of all members at all levels to meet and exceed their customers' (students) expectations (Tecklemariam, 2009, p.48-9). Basic Education Curriculum Framework (2017) reforms reflect commitment to implementation of character education in schools as it has integrated values and ethics in the curriculum and also provided a clear statement on the shift of curriculum delivery from knowledge transmission to skill development. It has also articulated the need to lay more emphasis on differentiated formative assessment and less of summative assessment with a view to ensuring inclusivity of all learners in education (including those with special needs). However, success in its implementation is pegged on teacher empowerment in both pre-service and in-service training. It is on this reason that the current study emphasizes the need for teacher training institutions to integrate character education in their curricula in order to set the pace on character development for all other levels of education.

3. Factors that influence character development

A child's character formation is influenced by the family, school, peers, community, media, religion, and biology (Berkowitz). These factors demonstrate that character development is a concerted effort which requires the cooperation and commitment of all stakeholders in modelling character qualities they inculcate in children/learners. It is imperative that they all play their roles effectively because adults and society have an obligation to nurture children with character qualities so that they can imbibe them with attitudes, values, knowledge, skills and ideals of the society to enable them to adapt to its dynamic changes so that they can effectively contribute to its welfare (Sifuna, Fatuma, & Otiende, 2006).

While the above influences play a significant role in shaping the character of a child, the parent has a predominant influence above all because all components of

children's character are impacted by child-rearing factors including parental affection, consistency of parenting, response to children's cues and signals, modelling, expression of values, respect for the child, and open discussion with the child (Ingule, 2011& Berkowitz). Research indicates that parents who were responsive to children's signals and needs had a warm loving relationship with their children, produced children of strong multifaceted character while those who set high attainable expectations and support had children who were high in self-control, altruism, and self-esteem. It further shows that parents who modelled self-control and altruism had children high in self-control and altruism (Berkowitz). This significant parental influence on a child's character requires teachers to partner with parents to nurture children with character. This is particularly critical in the early (formative) years of education although character development should be offered at all levels of learn.

Schools also influence learners character in various aspects including self-concept, social skills, values, morals, pro-social inclinations and behavior w. Peers also impact them on self-concept, social skills (including conflict resolution, making and maintaining friendships) and moral reasoning among others. This positive impact of peers should be safeguarded from any negative and destructive influences associated with peers in schools such as truancy, drug and substance abuse. Community also impacts a child's character either positively or negatively through mass media, neighborhood characteristics and cultural values. Negative community influences on children's character are rampant in many countries. In Kenya for instance, communities that practice female genital mutilation and forced early marriages influence low self-esteem and lack of confidence among girls and women in general as the culture influences them to be submissive and to also believe that their lives are confined to the homestead. Some religions also discourage girls from pursuing advanced education because they socialize them to internalize that they are home makers, hence they do not need advanced education to play their roles of child bearing and rearing, taking care of the needs of their husband and cooking for the family (Kibera & Kimokoti, 2007). Regular reflection on the influence of the community in character development is crucial if advocacy and interventions are to be effectively employed to safeguard vulnerable children and women in the society.

4. Strategies for enhancing character development in schools

Solomon, Watson, and Battistich cited by Berkowitz propose practices for promoting character development in school such as promoting student autonomy and influence; student participation, discussion and collaboration; social skills training; helping and

social service behavior, and moral atmosphere. They also note that the degree to which children perceive their schools as caring communities is directly related to the effectiveness of those schools in promoting student character development.

Berkowitz also outlines strategies for enhancing character development namely giving learners opportunities to practice good character; providing them with opportunity to build character skills such as perspective-taking, critical thinking, conflict resolution and opportunities to do good; and giving them opportunities to participate in service activities including peer mediation, student self-governance and charitable activities; providing them with opportunities to discuss moral issues with peers and reflect on them. He however maintains that achieving these strategies requires learners to operate in a safe environment where they can freely discuss the issues with peers honestly and forthrightly. Notably, schools in Kenya, particularly public schools are yet to create such a conducive learning environment. Many learners operate under fear due to the authoritarian environment existing in schools, where corporal punishment is still in use despite the fact that it was outlawed. A shift to positive discipline is critical if learning environments are to embrace a free and democratic leadership style. This however requires building teachers' capacity on techniques of positive discipline (Positive Discipline, a Training Manual, 2015) which requires teachers and school administration to devise positive ways of responding to learners' misconduct such as use of consistent verbal encouragement and acknowledgement, as opposed to negative sanctions or the use of force. In addition, other reforms are needed to enhance the learning environment. These include a shift from the knowledge transmission model of education to a competence skill based model; a shift of assessment from summative to formative emphasis, embracing learner-centered pedagogy and lifelong learning as well as technology integration. These reforms have the ability to develop learners with 21st century skills. They also enhance flexible learning with feedback and promote both inclusive and lifelong learning. Thus, the reforms promote character development.

In addition, reforms that integrate character development require devising appropriate assessment tools for evaluating character attributes such as attitudes and values. This is crucial because the traditional forms of assessment are not effective in inculcating learners with positive values. Journal reflections, observation of a learner on a specific character quality, and use of portfolios to record progress on implementation of character education should be employed to enhance visibility, accountability, communication and sharing the developments with colleagues (Wamahiu, 2015). Berkowitz maintains that success in actualizing the strategies requires schools to integrate character education in the curriculum; and to also incorporate their selected

character qualities/values in the school mission. This helps to institutionalize character development so that it becomes an integral part of education. Berger (2011) supports the view stating that there is no distinction between character education and scholarship as character is part of everyday education.

Learners support services (including mentorship, academic advisory, guidance and counselling, clubs and societies, financial support, sports and games) also enhance the development of character skills such as responsibility and negotiation (Cooper, 2007; Glossary of Quality Assurance in Japanese Higher Education, 2007). Notably, however, although learning institutions in Kenya have generally improved in ensuring that support services are provided to learners, there are major gaps concerning needy learners and those living with disabilities that are yet to be achieved such as academic support to help individuals access the full curriculum such as ramps, escape points in case of fire and assistive technology such as braille); and making interventions for vulnerable learners by providing work study, scholarship and bursary as needs arise. Such learner support is crucial in promoting a culture of inclusivity of all learners in the school. It also prepares them with the skills of citizenship in the wider society that is inclusive.

Character development is also enhanced through modelling. Wamahiu (2015) maintains that the culture of the school is critical in developing values. As such, teachers, staff, learners, peer groups, school boards and management committees should be role models in character that learners can emulate. Berkowitz adds that effective learner character development requires schools to make good character a priority and expectation of all members and also provide support structures to enable all members of the school community to meet the expectations. It is expected that teachers as facilitators of the education process should guide the school community to model character to learners. However, success in playing their roles demands that teachers are adequately trained on how to implement character education. As noted elsewhere in this paper, research shows that schools and teacher training colleges in Kenya have not integrated character education in their curricula. This means that reforms are critical in schools and teacher training institutions if they are to integrate character education in their curriculum.

Wamahiu (2015) pursues the discussion observing that the society no longer seems to have role models for the youth. She asserts that in Kenya, adults do not portray a positive image that can be emulated by children due to value erosion that has led to vices such as corruption, greed, theft of public money, negative ethnicity and lack of patriotism. This situation poses serious challenges in character development in learning institutions in Kenya because other stakeholders including teachers do not also

model character to learners. In agreement, Kibera & Kimokoti (20007) lament that teaching moral education in modern African has become a big challenge due to factors including lack of models for the youth to emulate and negative competition influenced by individualism and greed. Addressing these challenges is an urgent priority if character education is to be effectively enhanced in learning institutions in Kenya.

Intrinsic motivation is also pivotal in character education because it is driven by internal rewards and this enhances learners' understanding of the value of psychic satisfaction from achieving goals and behaving properly. It also helps them to internalize moral values (Berkowitz, 2013). He further observes that character development is enhanced through developing learners with problem-solving and decision making skills. This requires teachers to give learners opportunities to solve authentic real-life problems as a team in order to empower them to make decisions and also prepare them to become participatory democratic citizens in future. Achieving holistic quality and relevant education in the 21st century is pegged on collaborative implementation of the above strategies by education stakeholder. Below is a diagram that represents the author's visualization of character education.

Harriet Wambui Njui
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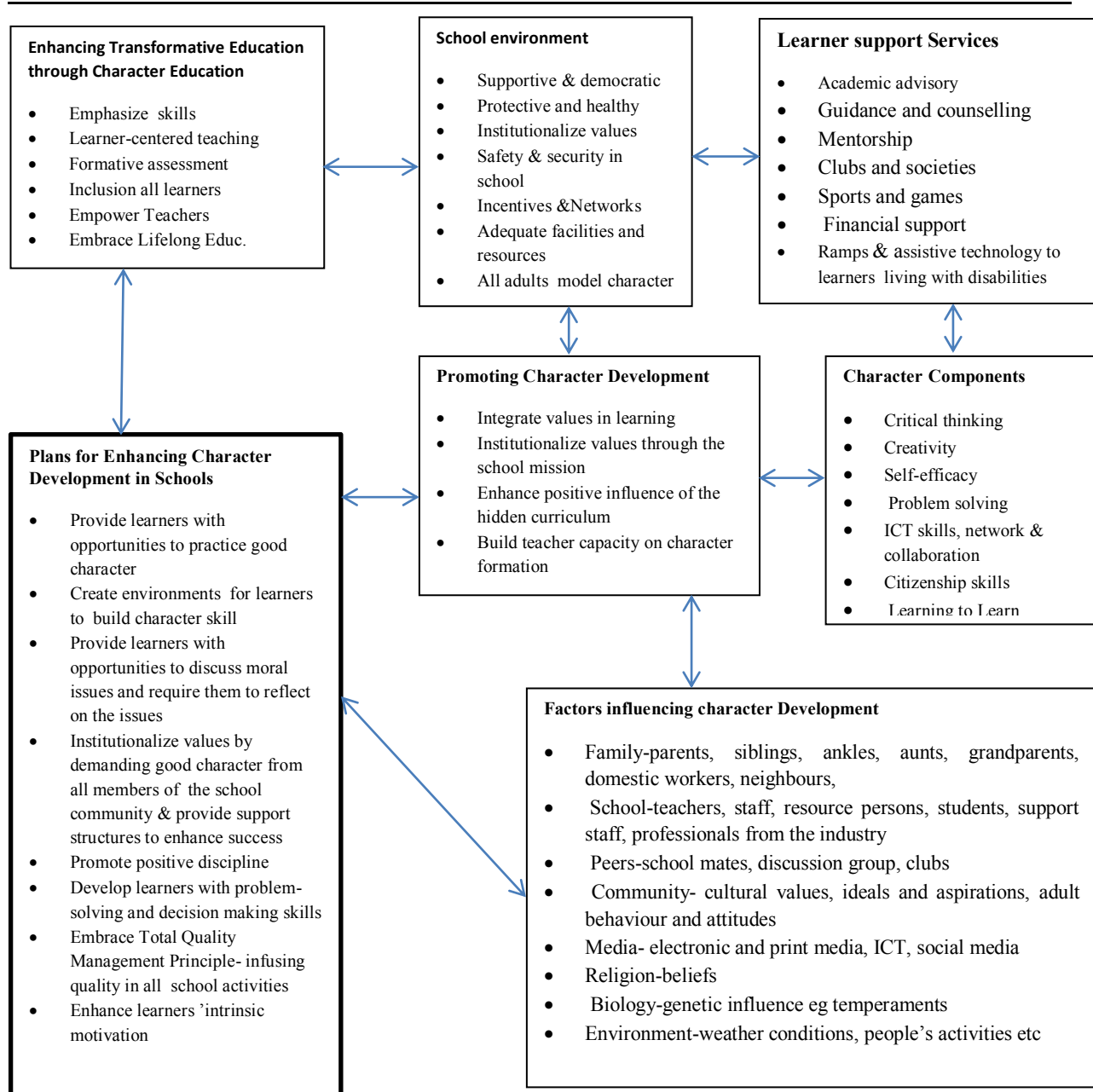


Diagram 1: Visualization of character Education

5. Significance of character education

Center for Curriculum Redesign (2015) views character education as a foundation for lifelong learning and support for successful relationships at home, in the community, and in the workplace. Character education also helps to develop the personal values and virtues for citizenship as observed above. Research shows that such capacities beyond academic learning of knowledge and skills are an advantage because they are not only useful in the workforce; they are also predictors of achievement. Character qualities are also applicable to a wide range of professions compared to knowledge and

skills which may or may not be used in future jobs (Center for Curriculum Redesign, 2015). In support of the view, the Kenya policies on education acknowledge that values are critical to the delivery of quality education and sustainable development. To this end, education policy documents emphasize the need to inculcate learners with desirable values such as patriotism, equality, honesty, humility, mutual respect, high moral standards, responsibility, respect, excellence, care and compassion, understanding and tolerance, honesty, trust, being ethical and other important values that may emerge (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The Constitution has mandated the Education sector to develop and incorporate values into the curricula at all levels of education as observed above.

6. Conclusion

The need to provide learners with holistic quality and relevant education is an endless debate that continues to attract the attention of educators and stakeholders in education. As argued in this paper, character education is a significant component of the 21st century education which enhances achievement of education for sustainable development. Although Kenya education policy documents spell out the character qualities to nurture in schools, implementation of character education has not been realized due to lack of integration of the same in the curriculum, lack of enforcement of education policy on character education which this paper attributes to the high premium given to examination and certification. This omission of a significant component of education (character) has affected virtually all sectors of life entrenching the vices outlined in this paper (such as nepotism, negative ethnicity and corruption among others).

The significance of character education cannot be laboured as it is the only way education can enhance learners' transformation into empowered ethical citizens as they go through the process of education. However, success in implementing character education demands that pre-service teacher training adequately equips teacher trainees with the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and pedagogy for effective character implementation. This study argues that teacher training institutions should set the pace in integrating character education in their curricula if other learning institutions are to integrate it and also effectively implement it. In addition, learning institutions should shift from the knowledge transmission model to a more practical and skill based model, embrace learner-centered teaching approaches and lifelong learning, shift assessment emphasis from summative to formative evaluation and emphasize the need for continuous reflection on teaching and learning experiences by both teachers and

learners. They should also create conducive learning environment for character education and provide structures to support it.

8. Recommendations

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study offers the following recommends with specific reference to Kenya:

Reforming teacher education to incorporate character education

Teacher Education should be reformed to align with the 21st century education. It should also integrate character attributes/values in its curricula borrowing from the Kenya Constitution (2010) and the 21st century skills. This is critical in ensuring that teacher trainees are equipped with skills and pedagogy they will need to effectively integrate character in teaching and learning.

Reviewing the content and methods used in teaching religious education in schools

Reforms in Religious Education content and methods are needed to enhance transmission of values rather than focus on preparing learners to pass national examinations. Religious education subjects should also be reformed to promote inter-religious values and understanding, with regard to Kenya Constitution (2010) and 21st century character qualities.

Creating an environment that influences character values

Both the internal and the external school environments should emphasize and model character attributes to the learners so that they can internalize positive behaviours. The external environment (the community in general) should also influence positive character attributes.

Enforcement of education policies

Schools should inculcate the character qualities recommended by local and international policy documents guiding education such as the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and 21st century education policies for the purpose of delivering holistic quality and relevant education.

Employing an integrated institutional approach in character education

A whole school approach to character education should be enhanced with clear structures of integrating character attributes/values into the curriculum with a view to providing learners with education that is relevant and adaptive to today's dynamic world to enable them to confront the challenges affecting the society. Institutional approach entails that a learning institution requires the faculty and staff handling learners to model the character qualities they seek to develop in learners.

Shifting emphasis from examination orientation to learners 'holistic development

A shift from summative to formative assessment is imperative if schools have to offer holistic quality education that develops learners with skills and competences that will help them to confront the challenges of today's dynamic world. This entails that the focus of education is skill development not knowledge transmission geared towards passing examinations for the purpose of acquiring a certificate.

Devising appropriate assessment tool for evaluating character qualities

Relevant assessment tool for evaluating character attributes should be devised cognizant of the fact that traditional assessment tools cannot effectively measure character attributes. In addition, other relevant tools including Journal reflections, learner observation on a specific character quality and portfolios (for recording progress on implementation of character education) should be used.

Promoting inclusive education through equitable distribution of learning resources

Enhancing equitable distribution of learning resources in all learning institutions is crucial in promoting inclusive education. Also, infrastructure and facilities for learners with disabilities should be put in place to enhance equity, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination

Emphasizing role modelling of character qualities

Teachers, staff and adults should demonstrate positive values in their interaction with learners as they (learners) are more likely to be influenced by the behaviour they observe from adults, particularly the teachers.

Parents-teachers partnership in character education

Both parents and teachers should recognize their crucial role in the inculcation of character in children through modelling. They should both reinforce similar character qualities to avoid confusing the learner.

Involving stakeholders in determining on the character qualities to inculcate in learners

Education planners should regularly engage all stakeholders (including parents, teachers, religious leaders, professionals and community representatives) in continuous curriculum debates to determine the priority character qualities to emphasize to learners.

Provision of learner support services

Services such as clubs and societies, sports and games, guidance and counselling, student advisory and mentorship should be facilitated in learning institutions to provide learners with avenues for learning character qualities including teamwork, cooperation, leadership, responsibility and respect for diversity. The support services can also be used as avenues to strengthen values taught in the classroom through

participating in activities including debates on topical issues, writing competitions, discussions and competitions.

Institutionalization of community service

Community service should be integral to the education experiences offered at all levels of learning to give learners an opportunity to learn values of giving back to the society, caring and sharing.

Providing intervention measures for correcting negative behaviour

Building teachers' capacity on the effective use of positive discipline in both pre-service and in-service training is critical in enhancing character development. This requires teachers and school administration to devise positive ways of responding to learners' misconduct as opposed to negative sanctions or the use of force. Also, interventions that involve learners in dialogue and reconciliation rather than fighting with each other should be employed in conflict resolution.

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